

GIANTS PLAYING MUCH BETTER THAN IN 1911

Rivals Met So Far Haven't Caused Much Trouble for Champions.

HARD AND TIMELY BATTING

Conditions Which Have Bothered the Highlanders—Diamond Comment.

Whatever the strength of the opposition the Giants are to meet this season their playing indicates that they are a better team than last year. They have been hitting conspicuously well, having averaged nine and a fraction hits a game in their first eleven contests, but even if they don't continue to hit at that rate, which they probably won't, the team shows such well distributed strength that the least we can expect of it is that it will be in the race all season.

The organization is working more smoothly within additional years of existence and as the individual members thereof run largely to youth an additional year has added to their confidence and speed. Then again the team is better fortified with reserve material. This has been shown since the season opened, the absence of two such factors as Doyle and Fletcher making no perceptible impression on the finish and achievements of the team playing. With their speed and concentrated action the team has the right to believe that greater strength of their natural ability will there be every reason to believe in a stronger club than last year. Certainly they start out as if they would be.

If this is so, where is the opposition to come from to keep the Giants from winning another pennant? From what has been seen of their Eastern rivals and from what can be judged of their Western rivals they are the class of the National League so far, excepting of course the Cincinnati. The Cincinnati must be excepted for, however, they are an interesting exception.

The Boston's are a better team than last year and its unfair to judge them.

The Phillies with their present crippled team, yet collectively the other three Eastern teams stand as much chance of making trouble for the four Westerners as for the Giants. That aspect of the case even itself up. As to any ratio of improvement the Eastern teams may have made, or whatever their potentialities in that direction, there is no sign yet that they are capable of competing for a pennant, though this is not very likely because of the improvement remarked on in the Giants themselves.

It is probable that the Western teams will not win more trouble for the champions than the Easterners. Both the Cubs and Pirates are strong enough to be dangerous even if not quite as fast as last year, but the Cards are still too slow.

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They have been

playing a more intelligent and better organized baseball, and they are gradually improving.

They don't look as good as at this time, but proof of that they aren't capable of hitting better than they are doing at this time, particularly before the arrival of baseball fans will be convinced to that effect.

The St. Louis Cardinals are about as good as last year, and are well to be expected.

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